

[Home](#)
[About Us](#)
[Church Growth](#)
[Directory](#)
[Leadership](#)
[Ministry](#)
[New Church](#)
[News](#)
[TAP](#)
[Donate](#)



News

[Breaking News](#)

[Feature Focus](#)

[Celebrate](#)

[Conference News](#)

[Local Church News](#)

[Lifting Up...](#)

[NEWS Archives](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[SEC News Resources](#)

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Email Newsletter

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[Who is the SEC?](#)

[Who is the UCC?](#)

[How Do I Find a UCC Church?](#)

[What Ministries are Available?](#)

[Is Training Available?](#)

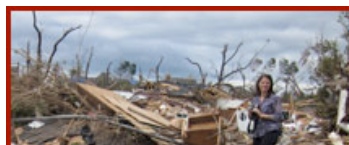
YOU ARE HERE: [HOME](#) ► [CONFERENCE NEWS](#) ► [TOUR AL TORNADO DAMAGE](#)



National UCC Staff, Conference Staff and Volunteers Tour Tornado Damaged Communities in Alabama

Southeast Conference Responds with \$3,526 in Initial Gifts

On May 16, Tim Downs met with Florence Coppola, the UCC Executive Minister of National Disaster Ministries and Angie Wright, the coordinator of disaster response in Alabama to tour the tornado-devastated areas, and meet with FEMA staff and local UCC pastors. They visited areas west of Birmingham, and received briefings concerning the loss of an estimated 300 lives, and property damage estimated in the billions of dollars. In a visit to a local school which had been taken over to distribute relief items and offer case management and support to victims of the tornadoes, they watched volunteers distribute food, clothing, water and much more.



Tim Downs noted that there has been a response of overwhelming generosity from across the United Church of Christ to the needs of those who have suffered. The national church is raising a special offering of \$250,000, and there have been special offering taken in churches across the Conference. The Conference office has received numerous requests to send work crews to assist with the relief and \$3,526 to support the relief effort.

Several times during the tour, we were reminded that following a disaster there is a second disaster, which is the arrival of volunteers and trucks filled with supplies.

UCC News

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Headlines from the United Church of Christ

[A 'Just Peace' future: Part 2](#)

Following the recently concluded World Council of Churches' International Ecumenical Peace Convocation held in Kingston, Jamaica, United Church News asked Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite to reflect on the history, progress and potential future of the Just Peace movement.





volunteers and trucks filled with supplies that are often not appropriate to the needs. This tends to burden the disaster relief effort and generate great waste. We were asked to remind people to response to requests

for specific items directed to specific sites for distribution, or to encourage contributions of money, which can equip our relief efforts. One Great Hour of Sharing has already distributed \$2,000 to each of the UCC churches in the affected areas to help them respond to the great human needs around them.

Florence Coppola noted that the United Church of Christ responds best in providing work crews over a period of years following a disaster. Often the immediate responses overwhelm a system, and then interest fades, although the needs continue. The United Church of Christ will begin to organize work crews out of the national office, and we are beginning to work with local churches in Birmingham to help them set up to host work crews for periods of five days. Tim Downs remarked, "the human cost of these disasters is incomprehensible. One person handed me a DVD as I was touring his destroyed neighborhood. I watched it to see was the story of a young woman walking through her neighborhood which had been blown off the face of the earth, moving slowly from one collapsed house to the next, stopping in front of a library that had been destroyed, and a church which was no longer standing.

At the end of the day, Florence, Tim, and Angie met with the area UCC pastors, Rodney Franklin, Gary Myers and Janet Weidler. Rodney remarked, "my people just want to respond. They see the suffering of their neighbors and they are anxious to reach out and do something. Everyone feels so helpless, but everyone wants to do something". Florence urged churches in the area to begin to prepare themselves to be able to host work groups, and to continue to collect money, and needed supplies in response to specific appeals. Angie urged the group to work with other coalitions of churches and community groups, which are beginning to organize for the long haul.

>> [Link here to read more on how you may help those in need.](#)

**We are deeply grateful for those of you
who have contributed so generously to
tornado relief here in the Southeast Conference.**

**So far we have received \$3,526
from our local congregations which will be contributed
to the \$250,000 goal set by the
United Church of Christ to
be designated for tornado relief.**

**In the last two weeks you have also contributed
\$4,870 to One Great hour of Sharing.
and \$135 to relief for those who suffer
from the tsunami in Japan.**

**The United Church of Christ joins with
the Southeast Conference
to thank you for your response
to our neighbors in the hour of their greatest need.**





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- ▶ [Church Development](#)
- ▶ [Communications Director](#)

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- ▶ [Seminars/Webinars](#)

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EVENTS CALENDAR

« < June 2011 > »						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	1	2

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